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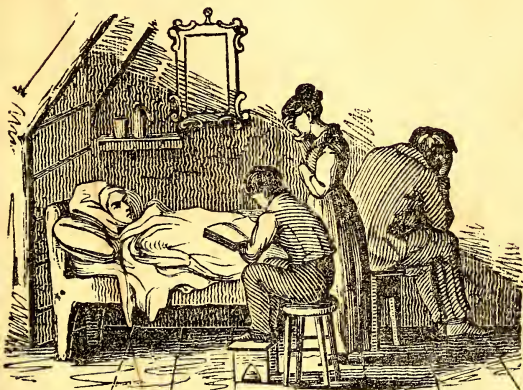
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THE HAPPY DEATH;
OR
MEMOIR OF MARY JANE.



WITH ALTERATIONS,
ADAPTING IT TO THE USE OF THE GENERAL PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL
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MEMOIR.

MARY JANE was endowed with an excellent understanding, as her questions and answers, and her style of speaking, which was far above her years, plainly showed. But this was her lowest recommendation. Our faculties are the gift of God, and we are accountable only for the use we make of them. Many an intelligent child is far from being amiable, while many a good child is far from being intelligent. What was most to be admired with regard to her understanding, was, that though she knew her powers, she never made a show of them. It was only accidentally that even her parents became acquainted with the extent of the information she had acquired.

Mary Jane had also a very pleasant countenance; but neither is this circumstance very important. It is not the face, but the heart, which God regards.

Mary Jane, like every other human being, had a heart which by nature was prone to evil. She was naturally inclined to be self-willed; but by the blessing of God on the pains which were taken with her, and on the pains she took with herself, this temper was almost wholly eradicated, or showed itself only in the desirable form of firmness and decision in well-doing.

She was very careful to speak the truth. When about six years of age, while engaged in serious conversation with her mother on the nature of pardon, she was asked if she had the recollection of any particular sins. After pausing awhile, she answered, evidently much concerned, "Mamma, I believe I once told a lie." The fault had been forgotten by every one except herself, and when the circumstances of the case were explained, it was found that what had dwelt so long on her mind, (it is believed for more than a year,) was not an absolute falsehood, but an equivocation, which, though decidedly wrong, many persons, adults as well as children, would have deemed hardly worthy of being remembered at all, far less of being so long remembered with sorrow. She was very reluctant to make absolute promises, lest she should not keep them. On her mother's reading to her, from a magazine, an extract on this subject from the memoir of Isabella Maria L——, the dear parent was much struck by remembering that Mary Jane had long manifested precisely the same objection against pledging herself to any line of conduct. On this occasion, Mary Jane said, in reference to that extract, "When I say I will try, I mean exactly the same as that little girl did."

It was not till after the death of Mary Jane, that the interesting memoir of Isabella Maria came into the hands of Mary Jane's parents. Several points of agreement between the characters of the two children are observable. Mary Jane, like Isabella

Maria, sometimes complained of being disturbed by the younger children, and would read till they were asleep, that she might pray without interruption. She requested her mother to grant her a room to herself. Her mother did not accede to this request, but told her to come whenever she liked to her room, which afterward she often did with great pleasure; and when six years and a half old, she would frequently go into the shrubbery for hours, with a book, which she enjoyed in that retirement, as she was then exempt from the bustle of the nursery.

Her parents can refer to many seasons when she evinced great spirituality of mind, and extraordinary delight in religious conversation. She also felt considerable interest in missionary exertions, and has sometimes very cheerfully made little sacrifices in order to contribute a trifle to that object.

She delighted much in reading; but the books which she usually selected were different from those which most children prefer, being almost exclusively of a religious character.

About a year before her death, she was much concerned that she had so long lived in the neglect of the Saviour's command, "Do this in remembrance of me." On her mother's telling her that it was addressed to the disciples of Jesus, that she must give decided evidence of piety before she could be admitted to the sacramental table, and that she was too young, she replied, "Mamma, when do you

think I shall be old enough ? Jesus does not mention any particular age. Will you promise that I may as soon as you think I am changed in heart ? I should not like to tell a minister that I was changed in heart ; would you tell him about it, Mamma ? ”

After this she was remarkably exemplary in her conduct for about a fortnight ; but though she did not always preserve the same tone of mind, serious conversation was invariably sufficient to interest and bring her back to a right frame, except during a short time, perhaps a week or ten days, in July last, when she manifested an indifference to divine things quite unusual. Her general deportment at this time was likewise far from amiable. There is reason to believe she was under the influence of bad example, and the circumstance showed her parents the vast importance of being watchful in this respect. When the cause was discovered, and an appeal was made to her judgment, she saw her folly in its proper light, and from that time she gave no more occasion for censure.

Prayer never seemed a task to her : she would at times express herself in very appropriate language, and with much real feeling. On one occasion, when she had no idea of any one being near, her parents were quite astonished to hear her petitions, the subjects being of vital importance, and offered up with all the fervor and devotion of an old Christian. Her ideas seemed quite beyond the capacity of a child ; and when, at the request of

Catharine, a younger sister, she began to teach her how to pray, she accommodated her language to her sister's understanding in such a way as evidently showed she viewed the exercise as more than a form of unmeaning words. She made Catharine repeat several petitions after her, and then said, "You must now think for yourself." Catharine said, "What must I think?" "Think of your sins, of your wants, and pray from your own heart: my praying wont be accepted instead of yours."

A few days before she died, she exhorted her sister to be attentive when her parents talked to her, and added with great earnestness, "If you don't repent of your sins, Catharine, you'll never meet me at the right hand of God." On her mother's then asking Mary Jane if she had repented of her sins, she said, "Yes, I hope I have, Mamma." "Have you repented of any particular sins?" "Yes, Mamma." "What are they?" "I think chiefly, Mamma, that I have sometimes disobeyed you and papa."

Once when her pain was very severe, she said, "My pains are great, but it is God's will, and his will be done." She had no fear of death, and no wish to recover; she often said, she would rather die. Once she remarked, she had not felt quite sure that day that she should go to heaven; she had no desire to get better, but she wished to live till she was quite sure of heaven. A meetness for it, and a full assurance of it, she most frequently prayed for.

At midsummer, 1833, Mary Jane was placed under the care of the Misses Atkinson, in Stroud; and it is believed that during her five months' residence in that town, the instruction she received at school and in the church, in connection with her own reading, was the means of increasing both her knowledge of religion and her relish for it. Her deportment at school was gentle, obedient and affectionate, and was evidently the result of Christian principle strongly imbuing her mind. Both as a pupil and a companion in the school-room she was a lovely character, and her death has consequently occasioned no small sorrow.

Just before the holidays, the clergyman gave, according to custom, a parting address to the girls, of whom Mary Jane was one, and was led to speak at greater length than usual on the brevity of life, and on the possibility that they might never meet again, as well as on the excellence of religion.

Two days afterward Mary Jane returned to her beloved parents. The flush of health was on her cheek, and on entering the house, such was the buoyancy of her spirits, that she danced for joy. Little did her parents then imagine that their habitation was so soon to become the house of mourning.

On Wednesday, December 18, exactly a week after her return, while playing in the garden, she took cold, and the next day was very unwell. On Saturday, she seemed to have recovered, and went to bed about nine o'clock in excellent spirits; but

very early next morning she awoke in a fit of coughing, and had severe pain in the chest. Medical help was obtained, and occasionally a gleam of hope of her recovery was enjoyed ; but on the whole, the disorder increased upon her, and finally issued in her removal from beloved and weeping friends, to the Saviour who gathers the lambs in his arms, and carries them in his bosom.

During her illness her irritability was sometimes so great as to make her appear unamiable ; but as this was quite contrary to her natural temper, there can be no doubt that it ought to be ascribed to her disorder. Probably even an adult Christian suffering equal pain and uneasiness, would have found it difficult to avoid the manifestation of similar infirmity.

Her thirst for reading seemed to increase with her sufferings. When advised to read less, she would say, "I must have a book, Papa ; it is the only thing to make me forget my pain."

In answer to a question put to her by her dear mother, she said, "I think, Mamma, I never felt the burden of sin so much as I did once last half-year while hearing a sermon ;" and on being further questioned with regard to the meaning of the expression she had used, she said, "It was a great weight on my mind ; I felt very sad."

Conversing with her father respecting a printed sermon which had greatly interested her, on the text, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him ;" and observing

her father affected, she said, "Papa, why do you weep? Don't cry, Papa, it hurts me so much." He replied, "My dear child, your father weeps because he sees you suffer so much, and cannot relieve you." She answered, "CHRIST suffered more." At another time, when her pain was very severe, she said, "My pains are great, but it is God's will, and his will be done." It is observable that from that time, with only one exception, she always, when addressing her parent, called him father; probably from the religious associations which, in consequence of the above-cited conversation, that word awakened in her mind.

The first evening after she was taken ill, she desired her nurse to read to her, and said, "Ann, read me that psalm, 'Search me, O God, and try me,'" &c. But when she found that the young woman could not at once turn to it, she said, "Never mind; read the tenth chapter of John, about the good shepherd." Being asked if she thought herself one of CHRIST's flock, she replied, "I hope so, Mamma, but am not quite sure; that is what I want to know." On several occasions, when asked what she particularly wished her parents to pray for on her behalf, she would say, "That my sins may be pardoned; that I may be made fit for heaven; that I may feel truly converted." And two or three times she asked her father to pray that she might have a good hope that her sins were pardoned.

On the evening of the Lord's day preceding her

death, being much exhausted from the application of leeches, she said, "The easy chair, Mamma." Her mother, supposing that she wished to be placed in it, said, "No, my dear, it will not do." "Well, there's an easier seat than that, Mamma." "Where, my dear?" "In heaven." "Do you think, my dear, that you will be in heaven soon?" "I think I shall, Mamma; I am drawing near to death." Perceiving that her mother was much affected, she lifted up her withered arm, and stroking her mother's face with her hand, said, in the most endearing manner, "Mourn not for me, dearest Mamma; rather rejoice: JESUS will comfort you when I am gone. We shall meet again at the right hand of God."

Her mother asked if she had prayed that day. She answered that she thought she had not. Her mother remarked that it had been a day of bustle and confusion, but as all was then still and quiet, she would do well to take advantage of the opportunity for prayer; to which she readily assented. Her mother then said, "You have often, my darling, prayed before me, when in health; I should like to hear you pray now, if you feel quite comfortable to pray aloud." She answered, "If you wish it, I will, Mamma;" and then in a very feeling manner offered the following petitions:—"Blessed JESUS! do thou take away my sinful heart, and give me a new heart. JESUS, do thou wash me in thy own blood; and O JESUS! do thou give me a comfortable assurance that when I die thou wilt take me

to heaven. And, JESUS, do thou comfort my parents when I am gone. Make me kind to my brothers and sisters. JESUS, do thou teach them the way to heaven, that we may all meet at thy right hand. JESUS, do thou make me more patient and kind to those who attend me; and O, look upon me as cleansed from all my sins by thy precious blood!"

Her mother then said, "I have often told you, my dear, of what importance it is to pray from the heart; but I need not ask you if this is from the heart; I am sure it is." With much energy she said, "Yes, Mamma, indeed it is."

Afterward she requested her mother, as a particular favor, to distribute her books among the various members of the family, specifying the particular book or books which she wished each to have. She was at a loss to fix on a suitable book for her sister Ellen, who was only two months old, and of whom she had seen but little. On her mamma saying, "Ellen will never remember you, my dear;" she replied, "No, Mamma, but I wish to remember her."

When she had finished the distribution of her books, she said with a smile, "Mamma, this is like making my will." Her mother said, "Have you just thought of it, my darling?" She answered, "No, Mamma; it is some days since I first thought of it." "Why did you not name it before, my dear?" "I did not like, Mamma; I know you would feel hurt."

She manifested a most delightful feeling of affection toward her parents; she would sometimes say, "What could I do without you? You are my best friends." After having received any little attention from her parents, her eye would affectionately fix upon them, and with a pleasing expression of thoughtfulness on her countenance, she would say, "If I should recover, and you should ever be ill, I would pay you every attention in my power."

During her illness she invariably spoke of heaven as the home where she expected finally to meet her friends: she liked to speak of heaven. One day, with a sweet smile, she said, "I think I shan't know any body in heaven, Mamma; you had a dear sister, are you quite sure she is in heaven?" "Yes, my dear, I have no doubt whatever of it." "Do you think I should know her, Mamma?" "Perhaps, my dear, she may be permitted to welcome you there." This thought gave her pleasure, and she said, "If I may be permitted, I should like to welcome you and papa when you come; perhaps your dear sister will too." About a year before this she had heard a sermon on "the ministry of angels;" it was a very pleasing subject to her, and she had often dwelt upon it, but till her illness she never mentioned it to us.

One day she requested her mamma to let her youngest sister, Ellen, be brought to her, begging she might be placed near her. She looked at her very earnestly, her countenance indicating much

thoughtfulness. About ten days previous to this she had read "Helen of the Glen," but had made no remark upon it; she now said, "Mamma, I have been wishing that your child Ellen may be like Helen of the glen; you know her name is not spelt the same; but it will be a happy thing if she is washed in the same blood, and made fit for the kingdom of heaven." She made several interesting remarks on Helen's piety, on her being about her own age; likewise on the advice Helen gave to her brother.

This conversation is merely mentioned to show her turn of mind, which was not immediately to speak of what interested her feelings; and also to show the concern she felt for her infant sister, who was dedicated to God in holy baptism on the very day that Mary Jane was first confined to her room; and it was a great disappointment to her that she could not be present. The infant had been named Ellen partly at her request, to remind the family of a little girl in whom she felt considerable interest, though scarcely personally known to her.

At different times Mary Jane's remarks, and her artless and earnest prayers, left a most pleasing impression on the minds of her friends. At one time, when Mary Jane had concluded a very earnest prayer, her mother, much affected, said, "My love, I can have no doubt now that you are one of CHRIST's lambs." The dear child replied, with an emphasis and feeling almost too much for a parent's heart to bear,—

"Is he a door? I'll enter in;
Behold the pastures large and green,
A paradise divinely fair;
None but the sheep have freedom there."

"My love," said her mother, weeping, "that is beautiful language, but it is the peculiar adaptation of it that makes it so delightful to me." On which she looked up, and quoted the following verse:—

"Is he a sun? His beams are grace,
His course is joy and righteousness;
Nations rejoice when he appears,
To chase their clouds and dry their tears."

Observing the joy which the recital of these verses occasioned, she said, "I can tell you, dear Mamma, the texts they are taken from," several of which she then named. Soon after this, mention was made of a little impatience she had at times manifested during her severe affliction, and she was exhorted to bear patiently all that her heavenly Father appointed her to suffer. She then repeated from the same beautiful hymn the lines,

"Is he a fire? He'll purge my dross,
But the true gold sustains no loss.
Like a refiner shall he sit,
And tread the refuse with his feet."

After a short interval, she proceeded,

"Is he a star? He breaks the night,
Piercing the shades with dawning light;
I know his glories from afar,
I know the bright, the Morning Star."

The last two lines of the next stanza were spoken with peculiar emphasis :—

“Is he a vine? His heavenly root,
Supplies the boughs with life and fruit.
O let a lasting union join,
My soul, the branch, to CHRIST, the Vine.”

She concluded with the following, having observed in her quotations from the hymn, not the order of the verses as they stand in the book, but the order suggested by the circumstances of herself and her dear parents.

“Is he a way? He leads to GOD,
His path is drawn in lines of blood;
There would I walk with hope and zeal,
Till I arrive at Zion’s hill.”

Of the sermons she had recently heard, she made particular mention of one on the text, “The bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench:” and a sermon on prayer, considered as the means of obtaining the blessing of GOD, from the text, “Ask, and ye shall receive.” Her parents often conversed with her on the subject of the atonement, and, considering her age, she seemed to have a clear understanding of its nature. Some interesting remarks she made on the subject cannot now be distinctly remembered.

On the evening preceding her death, a swelling was discovered in her right breast, which proving to be an abscess, about noon on the following day it was opened. The discharge was very great. Her

pain now left her, but extreme debility ensued. During the afternoon a cold sweat came on, which, when wiped off, soon returned; and she also felt great thirst. At a quarter before nine, with a clear voice, she asked for some milk. After taking a little she leaned back on her pillow, but spoke no more; her chin quivered, and immediately she ceased to suffer, for she ceased to breathe.

Two funeral discourses were delivered; and seldom have so many tears been shed at the death of a child, as were shed on the occasion of the decease of this beloved and pious girl. May many dear children on reading this memoir be induced to pray to God for that pardoning mercy, and that new heart, which he alone can give!

Some of you, my dear young friends, will die before many more years have passed away. Have you repented of sin? Do you love and trust in the blessed Saviour? Are you trying to please God?

If you desire to love him, there can be no doubt that he is willing to bless you, for he casts out none that come to him. "The bruised reed he will not break, and the smoking flax he will not quench."

THE
SUNSHINE OF LIFE.



Who is there that does not like sunshine! I should as soon expect to find a young person who could not eat any nice cake as one who disliked sunshine, for it adorns the earth and the heavens, and makes the heart cheerful. How it quivers on the running water! How it glitters on the gilded weathercock! How it blazes on the window panes! But I have a tale to tell you about the sunshine.

It happened one afternoon in my youthful days, that I felt quite tired of the pretty book that had kept me sitting still for two whole hours; so clos-

ing it, I went into the garden with a friend about my own age. Young people seldom like to be confined to one thing long together, and I remember with what gayety we ran along the grass plot, and up the garden steps, without bonnets, and in such haste, that by the time we reached the bower at the top of the garden, we were quite out of breath, so we sat down in the bower and looked around us. It was autumn, and the garden had a lovely appearance. There were the gooseberry trees, with their yellow, red, green and brown leaves, which hung so slightly that they seemed ready to fall at the least touch. Some of the sunflowers and hollyhocks were withered and dry, but an apricot tree, which was nailed against the wall, looked beautiful; its leaves, partly yellow and partly red, were curled up, and had a waxy appearance that much pleased us. A fresh breeze swept over the garden, and as it bent the tall poplar trees, the leaves fell off, and the wind drove them to a great distance, while some that were lying dry upon the ground mounted up into the air.

Pale autumn's hue had tinged the trees,
That rudely rock'd in the blustering breeze;
While springing lightly from the ground,
The yellow leaves were flying round.

I always loved a bustling wind, and we quite enjoyed the animated scene before us. Every plant in the garden seemed in motion. The ivy leaves were dancing round the edge of the bower, and a few tall dahlias, that had out-bloomed their companions,

waved gracefully to and fro, though we expected every minute that their slender stems would be broken. It was rather too cool to sit still, and we began plucking some of the withered leaves to put in a book. "Let us make a garland of them," said Mary; "they will look very pretty contrasted with some of the green ivy leaves;" so we set to work collecting the most beautiful colors. Soon a cherry tree attracted all our attention, for at the very top of it were some bright orange colored leaves mottled with brown, and they looked more beautiful than any we had seen in the garden. "Oh, if we could but reach them," said I; and Mary was determined to get them. We shook the tree, but the branches were stiff and strong, so that with all our shaking we could scarcely move the top bough on which they grew; there were plenty of leaves mottled with brown within our reach, and a great many on the ground, but these were nothing compared with the bright orange leaves that waved over our heads. At last Mary fetched a long stick, and striking the branch, to our great satisfaction the leaves fell to the ground. We both ran to the place where they fell, and looked about, but what was our disappointment when we found they were not even so pretty as many we had already gathered. Indeed we had some difficulty in distinguishing them from those which had fallen before. "Ah! I see now," exclaimed Mary, holding one up over her head, "it was the sun shining upon them that made them look so beautiful." And true

enough it was, for a few that were still left on the top of the tree, looked as bright and beautiful as those had done which were now the cause of our disappointment.

No doubt, hundreds of young people have been disappointed in the same manner, and probably they may have discovered that the sunshine alters the appearance of many things in this world beside the bright orange leaves at the top of a cherry tree; for many things that appear very beautiful when the sun is shining upon them, are not worth looking at in the shade. I remember once being very much struck with a bright light on the ground, at some distance from me; it was so dazzling that it appeared like a fallen star, but when I went up and examined it, I found it to be nothing more than a piece of an old glass bottle. It was the sunshine that made it look so beautiful.

When I was young I remember how I used to admire the beautiful carriage, fine horses, and gold liveries of Squire Adams, a very rich gentleman who lived near. Every Sunday the carriage drove up to the church-door with the squire and his lady, and they sat in the large crimson pew on one side of the pulpit. When the service was over, nobody thought of moving until the squire and his lady had left the church, and every poor man bowed, and every poor woman made a low courtesy as they passed the carriage. The squire and his lady received much company, and kept a great many servants. Ah! the sun was

shining on them then, but it was very different afterward. Squire Adams spent a great deal of property, and lost a large sum of money at the gaming table, so at last he was obliged to give up his carriage and fine estate, and take a small house at some miles distance, where I believe he is still living in a very retired manner. When Squire Adams gave up his carriage and servants, he was obliged also to give up his company, for the great folks who visited him before never went near him after. And what made all this difference? He was still the same Squire Adams. Why, the sun shone upon him no longer; the shade came, and then nobody knew any thing about him. And gloomy indeed was that shade, for he had found pleasure in dissipated amusements, but had taken no delight in reading his Bible, which is a lamp unto the feet, and a light unto the path.

Poor old Susan Jarvis lives in an alms-house, and is very happy, though the sun has long ceased to shine upon her. There was a time when she was very well off in the world, but it pleased God, "whose ways are not as our ways," to afflict and bring her low. She lost her husband, and soon after a daughter, her only earthly comfort, but she was enabled to look up amidst her afflictions, and say, "The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away: blessed be the name of the LORD." Though she lives by herself in an alms-house, yet she is not gloomy; she has found that the ways of religion are the ways of pleasantness. I think I

should not have said that the sun has ceased to shine upon her, for the LORD hath, in her case, made the heart of the widow to sing for joy : her treasure is not here ; she has seen enough of the changes of this world to know that there is no dependence to be placed on its sunshine, and she has found enough of comfort in putting her trust in the Sun of Righteousness, even in that Saviour, the LORD JESUS CHRIST, with whom is no variableness, neither the shadow of turning.

And now I have shown you the difference between the sunshine of worldly prosperity, which is liable to be obscured in a moment, and the sunshine of God's presence, which shall beam around his faithful followers to all eternity. Solomon says, "A pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun ;" and so it is, whether we look on the sun in the firmament, or with the eye of faith gaze on the Sun of Righteousness, the only Saviour of sinners, the LORD of life and glory !

I know not whether the sun is shining on you or not ; that is, whether your worldly comforts are great, your health good, and your prospect bright ; but if the sun is thus shining upon you, take care ! for when we have the comforts of earth around us, we are tempted to think little of heaven : when we feel strong in ourselves, our faith in God and his Son JESUS CHRIST is generally very weak. Take care, I say, of the sunshine ! In the storm we are sure to seek a shelter. In trouble we are ready enough to go to Him who is a very present help in time of

trouble, and in sickness and sorrow to pray that he will become the strength of our heart, and our portion for ever ; but in sunshine, alas ! God is not in all our thoughts ! I remember hearing a lady, who had known something both of adversity and prosperity, and who was then in worldly prosperity, say, that she found it much more difficult to live to God in prosperity than adversity.

You have seen how the sunshine quivers on the running water, glitters on the gilded weathercock, and blazes on the window panes. You have heard how it beautified the fading leaf of the cherry tree, and adorned the piece of the old broken bottle. I have told you also how worldly prosperity, like sunshine, puts a temporary glitter on all things around us, and you have read, that though the sunshine of prosperity did not keep rich Squire Adams from trouble and affliction, the sunshine of God's presence made poor Susan Jarvis happy. Whenever, then, the sun shines around you, ask yourself if it be likely to endure, and be not deceived when earthly things glitter brighter than those of heaven. Once more I say, have a care of the sunshine ! and seek the grace of the Redeemer as the greatest good to which you can attain ; for as a faithful servant of God hath said, " He who in prosperity finds God in all things, shall in adversity find all things in God."

THE END.

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